

Documentation
Glossy Ibis

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At 2:45 P.M. on November 1, 1980 my husband, Lynn, and I were approaching the intersection of Hayes and Richardson Road in Franklin County when we both noticed the ibis fly across the road in front of our car and land in a small stagnant pond to our right. The pond was adjacent to the road slightly below road level. We immediately stopped to observe the bird and were able to view it from a distance of about 50 feet. I used my 7 x 35 Leitz-Trinovid binoculars at first and then my Bushnell Spacemaster II scope at 20x. Lynn watched through his 8 x 40 Leitz-Trinovid binoculars. We studied the bird for at least 20 minutes.



Glossy Ibis in Franklin County November 1 through 5, 1980 taken by Don Tumblin and reproduced by Gary Herbst.

The sun was in mid-afternoon position and the sky was nearly cloudless. We were looking away from the sun as we watched the ibis. The bird was in full sun all the while. The body plumage was a dusky gray-brown with an iridescent green tint on the back. The head and neck were lighter and were speckled or streaked. The eyes were dark. The bill was gray, quite long and curved downward. The legs were gray. The bird made no sound and probed for food almost constantly. It occasionally lifted its head and looked around briefly. The only other bird at this small pond was a Common Snipe.

I set the "grapevine" in motion and November 2nd the ibis was observed by Jim Fry, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gambill, Sr., and Charles Gambill, Jr. All agreed on the identification. Lynn and I also returned on this day between 1:30 and 2:00 P.M. and watched the ibis for about 15 minutes. A local resident, obviously curious about all the commotion on his normally quiet street, informed us that the "weird looking bird" had been present in the area for about two weeks.

Editor

Other observers such as Jim Fry and Bruce Peterjohn report being as close as 20 feet from this bird with the sun at their backs for at least part of their 14 minute observation. They describe this bird as a first year winter immature and observed a dark brown iris which at no time showed any red nor reflected any reddish tint.

Although many reference books do not mention eye color in immature glossy or white-faced ibis and some sources such as Birds of Canada (1979) and Handbook of Birds of North American (1966) state that immature glossy and white-faced are indistinguishable in the field, two authorities support the position that this bird was a glossy ibis. H. Douglas Pratt in Birding Vol. 8 No. 1, Field Identification of White-faced and Glossy Ibis, pgs. 1-5 (1976) states that a red iris in an immature may be diagnostic of a white-faced ibis if the observer is near enough to the bird to observe the eye closely. The Handbook of Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Vol. 1: Ostrich to Ducks, pgs. 342, 343 (1977) edited by Stanley Cramp, et. al. states that the iris of an immature glossy ibis is brown until breeding plumage arrives.

Yellow-billed Stork

The saga of this African species in the United States is probably complete. It was seen migrating with broad-winged hawks near Detroit "early in the fall" of 1979 (Birding, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1980). On November 16-30 a bird of this species was seen wandering the outer Cape Cod localities of Orleans and Provincetown (American Bird, Vol. 34, No. 2 (139)).

It was first seen in Ohio on July 11, 1979 at Medusa Marsh (Erie Co.) by John Pogacnik. It remained there until September 27, 1979. On July 11th or 12th John called African Lion Safari Inc. in Port Clinton, Ohio and asked them if they were missing such a bird. They referred John to an importer at their business or next door to it who told John they had lost a yellow-billed stork about two weeks previous to his call. He said they had performed an operation on its wings but "it didn't hold."

The bird was last seen in Ohio on November 4, 1979 at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge by those observers participating in the refuges monthly census. The observers were taking their noontime break on the front porch of the refuge headquarters when a large crane was spotted flying across Magee Marsh. The bird then angled in flight and flew directly toward the porch but as it approached veered suddenly over the top of the porch and flew directly away across the refuge marsh to the lake front. Its wing span seemed huge. It disappeared over the horizon along the lake front leaving a startled group of observers with open mouths. Bob Crofts was present and knew the species from his African birding trips.